

GOVERNOR'S TRANSPORTATION VISION 21 TASK FORCE
Public Input Meetings – First Phase – 1999
Executive Summary

The Governor's Transportation Vision 21 Task Force conducted ten public meetings throughout Arizona from May through September, 1999. The purpose of the meetings was to elicit public comment regarding a long term vision for state-wide transportation. While encouraging all public comment, the Task Force specifically requested comment in three primary areas corresponding to the Governor's Executive Order guiding the Task Force. These areas include (1) definition of state-wide long term needs, resources and revenues; (2) governance; and (3) the planning and programming process.

Each of the public meetings followed the same general format. The co-chair(s) welcomed attendees, outlined the mission of the Task Force and invited public comment. A public comment form was made available and posed the following questions:

- ◆ *What is your vision for transportation 20 years for now and beyond?*
- ◆ *What services or infrastructures do you believe need to be improved in order to meet the needs of your region (and the state as a whole) 20+ years from now? HOW?*
- ◆ *Do you have suggestions of ways to fund improvements in services or infrastructure?*
- ◆ *What are your priorities for transportation services or infrastructure improvements?*
- ◆ *Are there additional issues or items you think the Task Force needs to consider?*

The enclosed report represents a synthesis of the public comments from the public meetings. The report is not intended to be statistically valid, but simply a "snap-shot" of comments made by attendees. More detailed reports, including a transcript of each meeting and detailed meeting summaries of each meeting are available from project staff members upon request.

Those attending the various meetings included local elected officials, staff members from state, regional and local governments, business representatives, members of the general public and the media. Several communities were represented at each public meeting, not merely representatives from the community in which the meeting was held.

Meetings were held in the following communities: Yuma, Peoria, Tucson, Sierra Vista, Kingman, Flagstaff, Chandler, Payson, Phoenix, and Glendale. This report represents a synthesis of approximately thirty hours of public meetings. A total of 456 people signed in at the ten public meetings. A total of 197 people presented verbal comments. Written comments, supplementary materials and detailed documentation on a variety of topics were submitted at several meetings.

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Key issues raised at the public meetings were:

Re: Definition of Needs, Resources, and Revenues

- ◆ Multiple speakers noted the need for increased revenues for transportation state-wide.
- ◆ Urban and rural areas share common transportation needs: access to employment, services (e.g. education, health care), shopping and recreation, as well as the need to move both passengers and freight in an efficient manner. Lengthy commutes are not limited to the urban areas.
- ◆ But comments in urban and rural areas also reflected basic differences on transportation issues. In the rural areas, access to enhanced services in other communities and the metropolitan areas is critical. In the urban areas, efficient and effective traffic management is important. The urban areas also face increased congestion and air quality concerns.
- ◆ Speakers consistently noted issues of growth and economic development and the related impacts on transportation needs across the state. Safety is also a critical need whether on high-speed freeways, at city intersections, or on rural roads.
- ◆ A fully multi-modal transportation system must include all aspects of multi-modal planning including pipelines, electronic transmissions and telecommunications.
- ◆ The various transportation entities throughout the state rely on a wide variety of funding sources.
- ◆ While there was no universal agreement on appropriate new funding mechanism(s), many speakers did support increased funding. Speakers noted the need to look to other states and countries for ideas.
- ◆ Several communities suggested developing funding partnerships. Partnerships might include: inter-agency partnerships e.g. ADOT and DPS; inter-jurisdictional partnerships e.g. the state, cities, counties, towns; public/ private partnerships.
- ◆ Aviation issues: The frequent comment from communities -- return flight fund property tax revenues to the aviation fund.
- ◆ Overall transportation system maintenance is critical to local communities whether roadway maintenance, maintenance of transit fleet equipment including wheel-chair lifts and bicycle racks, or automated message signs.
- ◆ Transit is critical to both urban and rural areas. The urban areas are looking for comprehensive systems that meet a wide variety of regional needs. Systems cited included fixed route, Dial-A-Ride, collectors, light rail transit. The rural areas are searching for ways to develop and implement basic services and to provide connections to urban areas. There is a recognition that the state needs to plan for an aging population that wants and needs to retain mobility even when no longer driving.
- ◆ Alternate modes are important to both urban and rural areas e.g. bicycling, pedestrian paths, carpooling, equestrian, etc.
- ◆ Rail service, both passenger and freight, is important to the state. Some communities are concerned about inter-modal freight capabilities.
- ◆ Some speakers noted the increased availability and need for use of changing technologies e.g. Intelligent Transportation Systems or ITS, alternate fuels, telecommunications, etc.
- ◆ The inter-relationships of land use, air quality and transportation are important.

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- ◆ Coordination with other planning processes e.g. Growing Smarter is important.
- ◆ Many communities noted the importance of giving ADOT the resources needed to meet their mandates, and the need to pay ADOT employees competitive wages.
- ◆ Several speakers complimented ADOT staff on their work, particularly on the local district level.
- ◆ NAFTA and the CANAMEX corridor is impacting many portions of the state and presents transportation challenges in terms of planning, programming, funding, and enforcement. This impact will increase as CANAMEX is fully developed. Many communities are seeking creative ways to effectively meet the demands of increased truck traffic directly related NAFTA.
- ◆ Seasonal populations serve an important economic mainstay for many Arizona communities, and yet, present a transportation challenge for service delivery and funding allocations.
- ◆ Strong educational efforts are needed for state transportation issues --
 - Need to educate voters/ residents state-wide of overall transportation needs and importance of increased funding to meet those needs
 - Need to educate the legislature
 - Need to promote alternate modes usage

Re: Governance

- ◆ State Transportation Board: Comments generally reflected the difference in urban versus rural interests, with rural areas wanting to retain the existing structure and the urban areas seeking increased representation on the board. Some speakers noted that the board functions well as it is.
- ◆ Increased coordination with other state agencies e.g. State Lands, DPS, ACC (for rail & pipeline issues) is needed. Some legislative changes may be required.
- ◆ Many local jurisdictions want increased authority to impose new funding mechanisms and more flexibility in use of existing funding e.g. use of gas tax for transit.
- ◆ Many local jurisdictions, especially the counties, are seeking more authority over land use issues.

Re: Planning & Programming

- ◆ Speakers expressed strong support for local involvement in planning
- ◆ Decentralization of decision-making within ADOT is important. Give District Engineers more authority.
- ◆ Strong ADOT multi-modal planning is important.
- ◆ Strong regional cooperation is important.
- ◆ Many speakers noted that ADOT has made major improvements in communication, but also noted that increased communication and coordination is needed.
- ◆ Communities want to retain unique qualities, and need flexibility from ADOT in planning and implementing transportation improvements, to retain those qualities.

In addition to the above areas, public meeting speakers also presented comments on the overall Vision 21 process, and made comments on specific area project improvements needed. These comments are included in the individual meeting summaries and the appendix.